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How the American media pushed Marcos out of Malacanang Palace

By Jude Wanniski

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One evening before the Feb. 7 Philippine elections, while watching the news, my teen-age son Matthew asked me who I wanted to win, Mr. Marcos or Mrs. Aquino. I didn't know, I told him. It wasn't clear to me who would be better for the people of the Philippines.

It would be easier for me to answer if the American press corps were giving me a better feel for what the campaign is all about, I said, but the accounts coming to me don't say anything about how either President Ferdinand E. Marcos or Corazon Aquino propose to deal with the economic depression that grips the islands. Friends of mine who have met with Mr. Marcos in the last year have come away disappointed, finding him tired out, set in his ways, unable to focus on the problems of economy. Still, it was gritty of the old man to call the elections.

Mrs. Aquino seemed to have the support of the middle class, for reasons not clear to me, and Mr. Marcos, like all patronage politicians, has the poor. The only bit of information that I have that makes me lean to Mr. Marcos, I said, is that Mrs. Aquino has promised that if she is elected she will see that Mr. Marcos is tried for the murder of her husband, Benigno. A mandate for revenge is not what she should be seeking from the voters, and the thought troubled me.

If we were in the State Department and wanted to get a story discrediting Ferdinand Marcos on the front page of The N.Y. Times, we would probably select Joel Brinkley, a Pulitzer Prize winner who in April 1984 wired together an account of top-to-bottom CIA control of Costa Rica and who in June of 1984 wrote a series of front-pagers for the N.Y. Times warning of an imminent U.S. invasion of Nicaragua. Mr. Brinkley was, with Jeff Gerth, author of the Jan. 23 front-pager on Mr. Marcos's war record. The following day he was all alone with the N.Y. Times lead story of the day:

U.S. VOICES FEARS FRAUD COULD MAR PHILIPPINE VOTING SENATORS ALSO SKEPTICAL

Furor in Congress Over Role
of Marcos in World War II
— Inquiry on Records

By JOEL BRINKLEY

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 23 — Senior administration officials and members of Congress expressed serious concern today over whether Philippine presidential elections Feb. 7 would be fraudulent.

Assistant Secretary of State Paul D. Wolfowitz, the senior State Department official involved in Philippine affairs, said that if President Ferdinand E. Marcos did not permit free elections, "it will substantially worsen the situation there." Mr. Wolfowitz added, "People will turn to radical alternatives, specifically the Communists."

He said the Administration was upset by recent developments, including the slayings of nine campaign workers and reports that "intimidation in a number of areas is growing."

Irregularities at the Ballot Box

Others who spoke at a Senate Foreign Relations committee hearing said the United States had evidence that extra ballots might have been printed for stuffing ballot boxes; that the ink to be used for marking the ballots was not indelible, so votes could be changed, and that plans for computerized vote-counting had been dropped.

Senator Christopher J. Dodd, Democrat of Connecticut, said, "I don't see how we can expect anything but fraud, considering the lie about his military record that Marcos has been telling for almost 40 years."

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